



## PEAK - Idaho's reach for abstinence!

### What is PEAK?

- PEAK is an abstinence-only, skill-building mentoring program that enables trained high school mentors, under the supervision of adult facilitators, to present material on healthy life choices to junior high students.
- PEAK is NOT sex education! It is a life-skills abstinence program.
- PEAK is based on the nationally recognized skill-based curriculum, Postponing Sexual Involvement (PSI), created in Atlanta, Georgia at the Grady Health Institute.

### What are the goals of PEAK?

- Following completion of the program students are able to:
  - Identify the risks associated with early sexual involvement.
  - Identify examples of pressures in our society that influence young people's sexual behavior.
  - Say no to pressure to become sexually involved.
- PEAK works to:
  - Reduce teen pregnancy by encouraging 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to choose abstinence,
  - Create a mentoring relationship between multiple age-group peers,
  - Give students practice with refusal skills,
  - Teach students how to identify and resist pressures that lead them to become sexually involved, and
  - Encourage parent, school and community involvement.

### How does PEAK work?

- The Postponing Sexual Involvement curriculum is incorporated into the school curriculum, as an adjunct to the health program.
- An adult facilitator is identified in the community to help with recruitment of teen mentors.
- Once teen mentors are selected and trained, they are placed into teams and enter the six, seven and/or eighth grade school class once per week for up to six weeks to deliver the following lessons:
  - **The Risks of Early Sexual Involvement**

- Students learn that postponing sex is their best choice by exploring why teens choose to have sex and why teens choose not have sex.
- **Social Pressure**
  - Students analyze pressures that are put on them to become sexually active, such as images and messages from the media as well as the internal pressure teens place on themselves.
- **Peer Pressures**
  - This session increases teens awareness of peer pressure and teaches them to set limits. The students develop a peer norm for setting limits on expressing physical affection.
- **Learning Assertiveness Techniques**
  - Students will learn three assertiveness techniques for dealing with pressure to become sexually active: saying no, taking the offensive, and if necessary, removing themselves from the situation.
- **Reinforcing Newly Acquired Skills**
  - This session reinforces previously learned skills. Students practice assertiveness techniques in a game show format and then role-play in small groups.

### **PEAK works because:**

- **Peer Mentorship**
  - Mentors serving as role models deliver the message most effectively to kids of this age group and maturity level.
- **Skill-based**
  - Through role-playing and observing behaviors from role models, the adolescents practice and see the skills necessary to make informed decisions.
- **Abstinence-only Curriculum**
  - This curriculum does not send mixed messages to adolescents. It instructs students how to resist pressures to have sex along with the necessary skills to follow through. The teen leader's help the students develop the conclusion on their own that it is best to wait to have sex.
- **Evaluated**
  - There is a Middle School Student Retro Pre-test given at the end of the six presentations to measure attitude, belief and knowledge change. Mentor Participation and Middle School Instructor evaluations are given to measure program implementation and receive important feedback. These evaluations are critical tools in making necessary changes to enhance the program.

### **What is the history of PEAK in Idaho?**

Peers Encouraging Abstinent Kids (PEAK) was created in 1996 to address the high teen pregnancy rates in five North Idaho counties - Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Benewah and Shoshone. Since then the program has been brought to 10 high schools and 13

middle schools in public health District 1. In the 2003/2004 school year 235 high school mentors were trained and 1,800 middle school students were reached with the abstinence message. In the 2004-2005 school year, PEAK will be taken statewide.

### **PEAK documents**

Click on the following links to download PEAK documents!

- Information sheet regarding PEAK
- Letter of support from First Lady Patricia Kempthorne
- Peak mentor application
- Release from transportation liability
- Parent permission form for junior-high presentations (retro-post evaluation)